

GREATER BOCA RATON BEACH & PARK DISTRICT
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
April 1, 2024

The MEETING took place at the Swim & Racquet Center and was live-streamed for viewing & listening through Zoom. The meeting was called to order by CHAIR Wright at 5:15 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Craig F. Ehrnst
Steven M. Engel
Robert K. Rollins, Jr.
Susan Vogelgesang
Erin Wright

CHANGES TO AGENDA: Public Comments were moved after each agenda item.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS:

MOTION was made by Commissioner Vogelgesang and seconded by Commissioner Engel to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on March 18, 2024, at 5:15 p.m.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Ehrnst	Yes
Commissioner Engel	Yes
Commissioner Rollins	Yes
Commissioner Vogelgesang	Yes
Commissioner Wright	Yes

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

REGULAR BUSINESS:

1. Boca Paddle Update

Malcolm Butters, Catherine Butters, and Brian Levine provided an update on the Boca Paddle project. They are currently refining the concession agreement with District counsel and have submitted the site plan package to the City of Boca Raton. They plan to resubmit the revised plan by the end of the week, aiming for site plan approval in July or August. They also hope to align with Miller Legg's North Park project on the same agenda for approval.

Brian Levine highlighted some of the additions, such as accessibility improvements and community programs. Boca Raton residents will receive three passes annually, while non-residents are allowed one visit per year. Membership benefits and pricing details were outlined, and comparisons were made to other facilities.

Discussion:

Concerns were raised regarding the restriction of access based on membership fees, particularly for residents who may work full-time or face financial constraints, emphasizing that the property is public land. A suggestion was made to adjust the concession agreement to potentially lower fees for residents. Mr. Butters acknowledged the need to balance community accommodation with financial stability and expressed openness to revisiting the fee structure. Executive Director Harms will further discuss this with the Boca Paddle Group, and they will provide an update at the next meeting on April 15, 2024.

Public Requests:

Mr. Cil Ciliberti expressed frustration at the proposed initiation and monthly fees for the Boca Paddle project. Given the project's significant assets and potential revenue streams, he suggested exploring alternative management options or negotiating lower fees.

Mr. Robert DuKate proposed that the District invest an additional \$6 million, alongside the existing \$10 million allocated for pickleball, to construct its own pickleball facility. Given that this is the District's first P3 program, he recommended seeking legal oversight from the Inspector General for Palm Beach County or the Florida Attorney General to prevent legal issues and excessive costs later on.

Mr. Art Turpel noted that experienced operators can utilize off-peak hours, such as Saturday or Sunday nights, for community play. While this may not align perfectly with family schedules, it presents an opportunity to offer non-membership access. He also mentioned some existing pickleball courts that could accommodate pickleball at reasonable fees and be a suitable option for families.

Mr. Harold Chaffee believes this is a tremendous opportunity for the Boca Paddle Club and that they must provide opportunities for those who may not have the means to access the amenities. He also suggested adjusting the hours to give families more time to use the facilities, especially those who work during the day.

2. Patch Reef Park Pickleball Operator Presentation by City

Greg Stevens, Recreation Services Director for the City of Boca Raton, Ryan Reckley, Recreation Services Superintendent, and Stephen Brown, Racquet Sports Administrator, presented the proposed operation and maintenance plan for the Tennis and Pickleball Center at Patch Reef Park. Their objective was to ensure adaptability and responsiveness to evolving public needs by adjusting programming and hours as required. The proposed fees align with the user fee schedule submitted during the budget process, with scope for additional discussion to meet the District's cost recovery objectives.

The presentation emphasized the City's dedication to excellent service, and existing operations across all parks were highlighted, with fees remaining consistent to support projections and cost recovery goals. A breakdown of court fees for residents and non-residents was provided, offering options for 6-hour and 12-hour court bookings. The utilization of a volunteer program was discussed to enhance facility operations. Visualization of the 18 new courts alongside existing ones showcased court layout plans with a commitment to data-driven flexibility, ensuring adjustments are made based on usage patterns. Plans to expand open play hours and days were outlined, along with initiatives to increase adult and youth programming, including instructional programs, camps, and specialty clinics. Furthermore, the presentation introduced a modified pickleball program for individuals with special needs, continuing popular programs, hosting tournaments and special events, corporate engagement opportunities, pro shop operations, and a flexible, data-driven approach to programming and operations to meet evolving community needs.

The Board commended the team for their exceptional presentation and expressed enthusiasm for appointing them as operators. They emphasized the significance of maintaining affordable fees for residents and praised the variety of programming offered.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ehrnst and seconded by Commissioner Rollins to reject all previous proposals submitted for the operator of the Patch Reef Pickleball Center and continue with the City as the primary operator of the Patch Reef Park Pickleball and Tennis Center.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Ehrnst	Yes
Commissioner Engel	Yes
Commissioner Rollins	Yes
Commissioner Vogelgesang	Yes
Commissioner Wright	Yes

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Public Comments were reopened:

Mr. Raul Travieso mentioned that April is the sixth annual pickleball month nationwide and expressed his desire to celebrate the sport's remarkable growth with millions of participants nationwide. He thanked the Board for their consistent support of pickleball over the years.

APPROVAL OF PAYROLL AND INVOICES:

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ehrnst and seconded by Commissioner Engel to approve the payroll and invoices as presented, totaling \$617,465.39.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Ehrnst	Yes
Commissioner Engel	Yes
Commissioner Rollins	Yes
Commissioner Vogelgesang	Yes
Commissioner Wright	Yes

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Executive Director:

North Park

Miller Legg will appear before the Community Appearance Board for the preliminary meeting with the city about the North Park project. Pricing for removing invasives and implementing a native vegetation maintenance plan will be discussed at the next meeting.

District 50th Anniversary Celebration

The District's 50th art exhibit will open at Sugar Sand Park Community Center next week.

Joint Meeting

The Joint meeting tentatively planned for April 24th will not proceed as scheduled. Alternate dates will be provided shortly.

District Counsel:

Mr. Horowitz updated that efforts are ongoing to finalize the Concession Agreement with the Butters group and their legal team.

Commissioners:

Commissioner Vogelgesang thanked Executive Director Harms for her hard work with the city and appreciated her dedication and excellent performance.

Commissioner Rollins thanked Chair Wright for her valuable insight and leadership. He expressed optimism about eventually reaching an agreement with the Butters organization.

Commissioner Engel commended Chair Wright for doing an outstanding job and extended his gratitude to Greg Stevens and his team for a terrific presentation and the increased cooperation between Recreation Services and the District.

Commissioner Wright thanked the City for a fantastic presentation.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION was made by Commissioner Engel and seconded by Commissioner Vogelgesang to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Discussion:

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Ehrnst	Yes
Commissioner Engel	Yes
Commissioner Rollins	Yes
Commissioner Vogelgesang	Yes
Commissioner Wright	Yes

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Erin Wright _____ Chair

Craig F. Ehrnst _____ Secretary-Treasurer